

2018 Current Fiscal Year Report: Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

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1. Department or Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs

2. Fiscal Year

2018

3. Committee or Subcommittee

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

3b. GSA Committee No.

5294

4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?

No

5. Current Charter

01/27/2017

6. Expected Renewal Date

01/27/2019

7. Expected Term Date

8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?

No

8b. Specific Termination Authority

8c. Actual Term Date

9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year

Continue

10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?

No

10b. Legislation Pending?

Not Applicable

11. Establishment Authority Statutory (Congress Created)

12. Specific Establishment Authority

Public Law 105-368

13. Effective Date

06/23/1998

14. Committee Type

Continuing

14c. Presidential?

No

15. Description of Committee Scientific Technical Program Advisory Board

16a. Total Number of Reports

1

16b. Report Date Report Title

12/15/2017

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

Number of Committee Reports Listed: 1

17a. Open 4 17b. Closed 0 17c. Partially Closed 0 Other Activities 0 17d. Total 4

Meetings and Dates

Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War in 1990-1991.

Start

End

10/30/2017 - 10/30/2017

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia Theater of operations during the Gulf War in 1990-1991.

03/20/2018 - 03/21/2018

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia Theater of operations during the Gulf War in 1990-1991.

06/25/2018 - 06/26/2018

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice and make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia Theater of operations during the Gulf War in 1990-1991. 09/18/2018 - 09/18/2018

Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 4

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$7,500.00	\$8,500.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$326,962.00	\$411,466.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$28,263.00	\$30,000.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$24,225.00	\$25,000.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$12,113.00	\$15,000.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	\$9,747.00	\$10,000.00
18d. Total	\$408,810.00	\$499,966.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	3.60	3.80

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

The Committee provides advice and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War. The Committee reviews all relevant research and investigations conducted previously and assesses their methods, results, and implications as a starting point. In addition, it reviews all proposed federal research plans, and other activities in support of research projects on Gulf War-associated illnesses. It also assesses the overall effectiveness of government research to answer the central questions on the nature, causes, and treatments of Gulf War-associated illnesses. In FY 18, the Committee heard updates from our intra- and inter- federal partners including VA, DoD, and NIH personnel and received briefings about novel medical research that might be applicable to research involving Gulf War Veterans. The topics discussed at the meetings and the preparatory work that goes on between meetings lead to the recommendations made by the Committee. The 2017-2018 recommendations align with VAs strategic goals of timeliness of high performing and integrating delivery networks to improve Veterans experience and care through personalized medicine. In 2017, two recommendations from the committee include A) VA expand its program to integrate research and clinical care and B) that VA develop partnerships that will improve research outcomes, improving the recruitment of Veterans into research projects, and developing cohorts that will help characterize Gulf War illness. Each of these will positively affect the Veteran's experience at VA.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has selected members from knowledgeable government, non-government experts, Veterans, and Veterans' community representatives who are qualified to competently address research issues related to Gulf War Veterans' illnesses. Appropriate categories of primary scientific expertise that may be represented on the Committee include, but are not limited to: (i) basic biomedical research; (ii) epidemiological research; (iii) clinical research; and (iv) environmental and occupational health research. Membership of Gulf War Veterans and their representatives is based on the members' abilities to represent the broad health concerns of Gulf War Veterans. In FY18, this committee has recruited a new Chair and three members to cover term-limit vacancies. Close attention was given to equitable geographic distribution and to ethnic and gender representation.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

The Committee meets up to three times annually. The meetings help ensure that VA's Research and Development program appropriately targets high priority health care needs of Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War. This will ultimately improve health care for Veterans. Meetings are held in Washington, DC, and other locations around the country to encourage Veterans to attend the meetings.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

The formation of this Committee is required under section 104 of Public Law 105-368. The Committee's membership provides an appropriate mix of public/private scientific expertise and advocacy for Gulf War Veterans that is not available within the Department.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

Meetings are open to the public.

21. Remarks

Term limits were reached for 6 RACGWVI members including the Chair. September 2018, 4 new members were added including a new Chair, a GW Veteran, and 2 scientists with expertise in Gulf War Illnesses.

Designated Federal Officer

Karen L. Block Health Science Officer

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Adams, Kimberly	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Community Legal Aid Services, Akron, OH	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Bunker, James	10/01/2016	09/30/2018	Natl Gulf War Resource Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Crawford, Fiona	10/01/2016	09/30/2018	President, Roskamp Institute; Tampa VAMC	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Harris, Marylyn	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Women Veterans Business Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hauser, Stephen	10/01/2016	09/30/2018	Univ Calif - San Francisco; Chair of Neurology	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hunt, Stephen	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Seattle VAMC; University of Washington	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Klimas, Nancy	10/01/2016	09/30/2018	Nova Southeastern Univ; Miami VAMC	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
McGlynn, Katherine	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	National Cancer Institute	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Nast, Jeffrey	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Environmental Protection Agency	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Ondra, Stephen	10/01/2016	09/30/2018	Neurosurgeon; North Star Healthcare Consulting	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Perez-Wilhite, Frances	10/01/2017	09/30/2019	NC Military Business Center	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Rauch, Scott	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Harvard University; McLean Hospital	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Tanner, Caroline	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	San Francisco VAMC; PADRECC	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Wallin, Mitchell	12/30/2015	09/30/2018	Baltimore VAMC; Multiple Sclerosis Center	Regular Government Employee (RGE) Member
Young, Scott	10/01/2017	09/30/2019	Kaiser Permanente Care Management Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Number of Committee Members Listed: 15

Narrative Description

The Committee provides on-going information to VA leadership regarding research findings related to Gulf War Veterans' illnesses. This process takes place through Committee meetings where recommendations are adopted, through communication between the Committee and VA officials where the content of these meetings is discussed, and through formal reports. This material informs and advises VA leadership with the ultimate goal of improved patient care of ill Veterans through research to develop new treatments. The reporting also addresses lessons learned from Gulf War Veterans' illnesses that are applicable to current and future troop deployments and thus the future execution of the Department's mission. In addition, the Committee provides a channel for Veterans and other members of the public to communicate their views and insights into Gulf War research.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

Improvements to health or safety



Trust in government



Major policy changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome Comments

NA

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cost Savings Comments

NA

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

201

Number of Recommendations Comments

This is a total of recommendations for FY 2003 through FY 2017 (includes 3 recommendations for FY2018).

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

50%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

50%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

It should be noted a substantial portion of the recommendations from previous years cannot be fully implemented by VA because they call for joint DoD/VA actions, actions to be taken only by intra-VA departments, actions to be taken by DoD only, or actions to be taken by Congress.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments

Feedback is provided to the Committee through a variety of mechanisms, including written responses, follow up briefings by senior VA officials and other federal program managers, oral presentations at Committee meetings, and telephone conference calls.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Comments

NA

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

NA

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Comments

N/A